



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1104.0 - CURF Microdata News, Feb 2010

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 26/02/2010



In this Issue

Includes: a note from our Director



New CURF releases

Includes: the new and those coming soon



Using the on-site Data Lab

Includes: getting best value from Expanded CURFs



NatStats 2010

Includes: information on the 2010 conference at Darling Harbour, Sydney



Please send us your citations!

Includes: our Published Research Using CURFs web page can include your work



Universities Australia Agreement

Includes: access to CURFs, on-site Data Lab, Census Table Builder and more



Client consultation - thank you

Includes: it's not too late to input to ABS future directions for microdata access

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IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to a new year and the first release of the CURF Microdata News for 2010. This issue includes a New Year reminder to universities about the ABS products and services provided under the ABS/Universities Australia Agreement. The Agreement provides free end-user access to a range of microdata related products and services. These are free to end-users because Universities Australia has paid for access on behalf of its member universities. The Agreement offers more than CURFs! It also includes Census Table Builder, access to ABS Expanded CURFs in the on-site Data Lab, Statistics New Zealand Basic CURFs and a range of permitted commercial uses of CURFs and Census Table Builder. Read more below.

This issue also notes the March release of the keenly awaited National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey CURFs. Previously released as one CURF, for the 2008 Survey two Expanded CURFs will be released.

Lastly, I take the opportunity to thank those who have contributed their thoughts and ideas about future ABS microdata access strategies. Your input was invited in the November 2009 CURF News and many have contributed. It isn't too late to have your say. See more below or email me at microdata.access@abs.gov.au

Best wishes

Kim Farley-Larmour
Director, Microdata Access Strategies

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NEW CURF RELEASES

This part of the CURF News describes recent and forthcoming CURF releases. You can also keep up to date with CURF releases by subscribing to our free Email Notification Service or the ABS RSS Feed. To apply for access to any of the following please use the [MiCRO online CURF application system](#) web page.

Microdata: Labour Force Survey and Forms of Employment Survey, Basic and Expanded CURF, Australia, November 2008 (cat. no. 6202.0.30.007) *Released: 28 January 2010*

These Basic and Expanded CURFs provide information from both the monthly Labour Force Survey and the related Forms of Employment supplementary survey.

Detailed labour force and demographic characteristics for the civilian population aged 15 years and over are included. In addition, data are provided on independent contractors, other business operators and employees. Information is also provided on people who had found their job through a labour hire firm or employment agency.

The Basic CURF is available on CD-ROM and via the ABS Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL). The CD-ROM allows users to tabulate, manipulate and analyse data to their individual specifications. The Expanded CURF is only available in the RADL and is accessible to authorised users via the ABS website. The RADL enables the ABS to make more detailed microdata available than on CD-ROM, while still maintaining the confidentiality of ABS data providers.

Steps to confidentialise the dataset are taken to ensure the integrity of data, optimise its content and maintain confidentiality of respondents. They include removing any information that might uniquely identify an individual, reducing the level of detail for some items and collapsing some categories.

Microdata: Survey of Education and Work, Basic CURF, Australia, May 2009 (cat. no. 6227.0.30.001) *Released: 28 January 2010*

This CURF from the 2009 Survey of Education and Work provides selected information on participation in education, highest educational attainment, transition from education to work and current labour force and demographic characteristics for the civilian population aged 15-64 years and persons aged 65-74 years who are in the labour force or marginally attached to it. Characteristics reported on include: type of educational institution attended or attending; level and main field of education of current study and highest level and main field of educational attainment. Information on unsuccessful enrolment and deferment of study is included for persons not studying in the survey year.

Users are able to tabulate, manipulate and analyse data to their individual specifications. Steps to confidentialise the data set are taken to ensure integrity of data, optimise its content and maintain confidentiality of respondents. They include removing any information that might uniquely identify an individual, reducing the level of detail for some items and collapsing some categories.

The CURF includes metadata files and documentation to enable users to read the data into SAS, SPSS or Stata software. Users can then analyse the data using any method supported by SAS, SPSS or Stata, including cross tabulation and correlative analyses.

The Basic CURF is available either on CD-ROM or accessible through the RADL. A Technical Manual explaining data content, technical details and conditions of use is will be released at the same time as the

CURF and is available on the ABS website.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, Expanded CURF 2008 (cat. no. 4720.0.55.001) **Expected release: March 2010**

Microdata from the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) will be released as two CURFs. Both CURFs will be Expanded files but each will contain different levels of geography. Client may apply for access to either or both CURFs. The normal 'bundled' price of \$2,140 will be charged where clients apply for access to both files at the same time.

The two files will be:

- a State level CURF comprising the geographic item State of usual residence item only, with all items likely to identify remoteness being removed.
- a State by Remoteness level CURF comprising the geographic item State by Remoteness with only acceptable levels of output being available.

The CURFs contain confidentialised data about each selected person and the household to which they belong. Data are available for the following topics: language and culture, social capital, life experiences, health, education, work, income and finances, housing and mobility, transport, information technology, and safety, crime and justice.

As with all Expanded CURFs, the files are only available through the RADL.

Information about the data content, technical details and conditions of use will be provided in the **NATSISS: User Guide, 2008** (cat. no. 4720.0).

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USING THE ON-SITE DATA LAB

Why use the ABS on-site Data Lab?

The ABSDL is the data analysis solution for high-end data users who want to extract full value from CURF microdata. It offers a richer and more interactive experience of the data than is possible in the ABS Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL) and is available in ABS Offices in each state and territory.

While the ABSDL can be used to access Specialist (customised) CURFs it can also be used for analysis of Expanded CURFs. There are no automated protections of data within the ABSDL, which means that you can undertake cross tabulations and other forms of analysis beyond what is possible in RADL. Your outputs will be reviewed by ABS staff before their release to you to ensure the confidentiality of respondents is protected.

What do recent ABSDL clients have to say?

Here are some stories from some of our recent ABSDL clients:

"After several months of work with the RADL, we decided to use the ABSDL to explore its advantages and see if it could help us with our data analysis. Our plans before going to the ABSDL were about having better data analysis and survey-based estimations. In particular, we wanted to perform data analysis based on commands which are blocked with RADL, for example cross tabulation, graphing the data and more descriptive statistics.

The people that welcomed us in ABS Sydney office were very friendly and helped us with anything we needed throughout the three hour session. We accomplished our planned analysis, and spent most of our time looking at graphs that we designed. It was very beneficial for us to look (by graphing) at the variables that we use by cross tabulating."

"ABSDL was easy to set up. ABS staff worked very efficiently helping me with appointment set up and output delivery. The facility was good, and staff were very friendly and helpful."

How can I get access and how much does it cost?

The ABSDL is available in ABS Offices in each state and territory, and can be booked for half or full day sessions.

ABSDL is provided on a cost-recovered basis, with a base price of \$2,590 (including GST). Of this, \$2,030 covers the one-off set up cost, and \$560 provides one standard ABSDL session of 3.5 hours. Additional sessions are priced at \$560 per 3.5 hours or part thereof.

Clients in universities participating in the ABS/Universities Australia Agreement are entitled to a specified ABSDL service - for which there is no charge to the individual user. This is because Universities Australia has paid for access on behalf of universities.

If you are interested in learning more About the ABS Data Laboratory (ABSDL), please refer to the information on our website or contact us at microdata.access@abs.gov.au

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NatStats 2010 Conference

15-17 September 2010 Darling Harbour Sydney

The Australian Bureau of Statistics will be hosting another NatStats conference at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour on 15-17 September 2010.

NatStats 2010 will build on the enthusiasm and passion generated by delegates at NatStats08 and aims to build stronger links with key stakeholders, strengthen the understanding of statistical issues within and across governments, and consolidate support for current and emerging statistical initiatives.

An exciting program is being developed and will address a range of issues regarding national statistics. Please visit www.nss.gov.au/natstats for more information.

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PLEASE SEND US YOUR CITATIONS!

Please let us know about your published research that includes the use of CURFs by sending us a citation to your thesis, journal article, report or conference paper. We will publish all citations we receive on our [Published Research using CURF Microdata](#) web pages so that others can share the benefits of your research. The information helps ABS and researchers understand the range of research activities undertaken using CURFs.

Send your citation to microdata.access@abs.gov.au

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UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA AGREEMENT

What's included?

The ABS/Universities Australia Agreement provides a range of microdata products and services to universities. While access to ABS CURFs has been included in the Agreement for many years, from 2009 the Agreement has also included access to Census Table Builder, use of Expanded CURFs in the on-site Data Lab (ABSDL) in ABS Offices and, access to Statistics New Zealand Basic CURFs.

Also new from 2009 is use of CURFs (and Census Table Builder) for some commercial use. This change acknowledges and facilitates the expertise that the academic community contributes to other organisation via consultancies and other activities. Permitted commercial uses under the Agreement include:

- Consultancy services for a third party, based on CURFs or use of Census Table Builder
- Statistical and other reports and publications produced from CURFs or from use of Census Table Builder
- Teaching materials developed from CURFs or from use of Census Table Builder

Does the Agreement mean that access is free?

No, and yes. Universities Australia has paid for access on behalf of the Australian universities participating in the Agreement. But individual staff members and students are not charged for their use of the products and services covered under the Agreement.

Find out more

Thirty five universities participate in the Agreement. For a list of these and more information about the products and services provided by the Agreement see the [ABS/Universities Australia Agreement](#) web page.

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CLIENT CONSULTATION - THANK YOU

REEM OUTCOMES

In November 2009, the CURF Newsletter included an article about a new ABS project that is looking at strategies for making microdata available to users in a more flexible way. See 'New directions for microdata access'.

We invited our readers to contact us and contribute their ideas or comments. We also contacted a selection of microdata users to ask them how they currently use microdata and the type of microdata analysis they might like to do in the future.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who gave us their thoughts, ideas and time. Your contributions were invaluable and are helping us plan for microdata products and services that will meet our clients' microdata needs into the future.

And it's not too late to contribute your views and ideas about current or future ABS microdata access. To do so, please contact Kim Farley-Larmour (Director of Microdata Access Strategies) or Michelle Gifford (Assistant Director) at microdata.access@abs.gov.au.

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CURF Microdata News is a quarterly newsletter created by the Microdata Access Strategies Section at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

CURF Microdata News is aimed at informing new and current Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) Microdata users about issues and developments in the access to, and use of, CURF Microdata. The newsletter periodically covers topics such as available and forthcoming microdata releases, terms and conditions of access, responsible access to microdata and best practice tips, pricing, microdata research outputs, frequently asked questions, and information about applying for ABS CURF microdata.

Interested readers are also invited to visit the CURF Microdata pages on the ABS web site for relevant up-to-date information about each of these matters.

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